

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Madam Speaker, I find it amazing that we cannot come to this House floor and discuss the chief officer of this House and different violations that have been alleged of this chief officer that has put a cloud over this House. I find that astounding. I have never, never in my 24 years seen these kinds of rules enforced on the House floor, and I am stunned that the leadership seems so insistent on gagging us in this body. No wonder this body has created such cynicism.

CONCERNING RELEASE OF REPORT PAID FOR BY TAXPAYERS' MONEY

(Mr. WAXMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER].

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding to me.

Basically what I was trying to do is, I had a whole list of editorials that have been written across the country dealing with this report that we have been trying to get released for over a month.

Mr. understanding of the ruling of the Chair is that we cannot even talk about what the editorial said. I find that fairly astonishing, that they tell us we can go outside and talk about it, but we cannot talk about it on the floor.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, if I can reclaim my time, I would mention to the gentlewoman and others that the so-called Committee on Government Reform and Oversight has been issuing reports scathingly attacking the administration without any evidence. They keep on saying, "The report says that," and that is their justification for their accusations, both on the Travel Office, and they are going to try to do something on the FBI files, a very, very partisan hatchet job.

Those reports are being issued without evidence, but a report that we have paid for with taxpayers' money we are not allowed to see, and the public is being kept from having those reports available to us.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. I thank the gentleman from California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. LINDER. Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. LINDER. The gentleman's time has expired, but the point of order is the same one, that he is referring to matters against the rules of the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will sustain the point of order, and requests that all Members show re-

spect for and abide by the rules of the House.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, I would like to be heard on the point of order before the Speaker rules on the point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has already ruled on the point of order.

Mr. WAXMAN. I guess that is it: The sentence first, and then we will have the trial later.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from California [Mr. WAXMAN] have a parliamentary inquiry he wishes to make?

Mr. WAXMAN. I do, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. WAXMAN. As I understand it, Madam Speaker, the House of Representatives has spent around half a million, maybe more, to ask for a report to be submitted to our committees. Why can that not be made public, and why is that inappropriate to say on the House floor?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Prior rulings of the Speaker have sustained the point of order in this and prior Congresses that press accounts relating to matters currently before the Standards of Official Conduct Committee are not a proper subject for debate on the floor. That is why the gentleman from Georgia's point of order was sustained.

Mr. WAXMAN. Further parliamentary inquiry, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may proceed.

Mr. WAXMAN. There is a ruling that we as Members of the House of Representatives may not speak in protest over the committee's refusal to make this report public?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The duty of the Chair is to enforce the rules of the House as they are written and have been interpreted. The rules of the House, as the Chair has ruled in this and prior Congresses, make it out of order for any Member to refer to any subject currently before the Standards Committee, whether through the Members' own words, or through the recitation of words printed in any other medium outside the floor of this House, except when a question of privilege is pending.

The Chair will continue to abide by and enforce the rules of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTION TO OFFER RESOLUTION RAISING QUESTION OF PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. LINDER. Madam Speaker, pursuant to clause 2, rule IX, I hereby give notice of my intention to offer a question of privileges of the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state the form of the resolution.

Mr. LINDER. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, a complaint filed against Representative Gephardt alleges House Rules have been violated by Representative Gephardt's concealment of profits gained through a complex series of real estate tax exchanges and;

Whereas, the complaint also alleges possible violations of banking disclosure and campaign finance laws or regulations and;

Whereas, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct has in other complex matters involving complaints hired outside counsel with expertise in tax laws and regulations and;

Whereas, the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct is responsible for determining whether Representative Gephardt's financial transactions violated standards of conduct or specific rules of the House of Representatives; and

Whereas, the complaint against Representative Gephardt has been pending before the committee for more than seven months and the integrity of the ethics process and the manner in which Members are disciplined is called into question; and

Whereas, on Friday, September 20, 1996 the ranking Democrat of the Ethics Committee, Representative James McDermott in a public statement suggested that cases pending before the committee in excess of 60 days be referred to an outside counsel; now be it

Resolved that the committee on Standards of Official Conduct is authorized and directed to hire a special counsel to assist in the investigation of the charges filed against the Democrat Leader Representative Richard Gephardt.

Resolved that all relevant material presented to, or developed by, the committee to date on the complaint be submitted to a special counsel, for review and recommendation to determine whether the committee should proceed to a preliminary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time or place designated by the Chair in the legislative schedule within 2 legislative days. The Chair will announce that designation at a later time.

A determination as to whether the resolution constitutes a question of privileges will be made at that later time.

CORRECTIONS CALENDAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is the day for the call of the Corrections Calendar. The Clerk will call the first bill on the Corrections Calendar.

SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY RELIEF ACT OF 1996

The Clerk called the bill (H.R. 3153) to amend title 49, United States Code, to exempt from regulation the transportation of certain hazardous materials by vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less.

The Clerk read the bill, as follows:

H.R. 3153

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,